

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 03393 110502Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /052 W
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R 110306Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8267

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY MANILA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 3393

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, XC, US, SN

SUBJ: U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

REF: A. STATE 172357; B. JAKARTA 10141; C. SINGAPORE 3364

1. REF A HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH PAO. WE HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED
USIS INTEGRAL AND IMPORTANT PART OF MISSION. I WILL CONTINUE
TO GIVE PROGRAM AND OBJECTIVES MY PERSONAL ATTENTION AND
GUIDANCE.

2. AS TO THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN SUPPORT OF OUR POLICIES
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, OUR EXPERIENCE PARALLELS THAT DESCRIBED
BY EMBASSY JAKARTA IN REF B. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S PUBLIC
DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN MAKING CLEAR TO THE SINGAPOREAN
LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC OUR POLICIES AND THE MOTIVES BEHIND
THEM IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTENTION
HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED -- THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTHERN AFRICA,
HUMAN RIGHTS, ARMS TRANSFERS, ETC. USIS SINGAPORE HAS UTILIZED
SKILLFULLY THE MATERIAL IT HAS RECEIVED IN KEEPING OUR TARGET
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AUDIENCE ABREAST OF U.S. POLICIES.

3. DESPITE THE ADMINISTRATION'S VARIOUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS
TO THE CONTRARY, HOWEVER, THE SINGAPOREANS STILL PROFESS
UNCERTAINTY OVER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS OF SOUTHEAST
ASIA. THERE IS A PERSISTENT CONCERN HERE THAT THE ADMINIS-
TRATION PLACES LOW PRIORITY ON THE REGION, DOES NOT INTEND TO PLAY

AN ACTIVE ROLE AND, IN GENERAL, CONSIDERS IT OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO U.S. INTERESTS. THIS PERCEPTION OF U.S. POLICY WAS GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED IN SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE'S OPENING ADDRESS TO THE JUST-CONCLUDED ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR (KUALA LUMPUR 5122). REFTEL C NOTED THAT WE AGAIN TOOK STEPS VIA PAO'S RELATIONSHIP WITH P.M. LEE'S PRESS SECRETARY TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, AND ALSO INDICATED OUR BELIEF THAT THE PICTURE PAINTED BY THE P.M. MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO DRAMATIZE HIS POSITION ON NEED TO STRENGTHEN ASEAN'S ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS.

4. SINGAPORE ALSO IS CONCERNED OVER THE DIRECTION OF U.S. ECONOMIC POLICY. WHILE APPRECIATING THE PUBLIC COMMITMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF FREER TRADE AND ITS MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE TOWARD NORTH/SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES, SINGAPOREANS CONTINUE TO WORRY THAT THE USG -- THROUGH DESIGN OR INADVERTENCE -- WILL TAKE ACTIONS HAMPERING SINGAPORE'S EXPORTS TO THE U.S. OR, ESPECIALLY, DISCOURAGING THE FLOW OF U.S. PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO SINGAPORE. U.S. TAX POLICY IS MATTER OF PARTICULAR CONCERN.

5. IN SUM, THE ADMINISTRATION'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL ASSET IN PRESENTING ITS POLICIES IN SINGAPORE. WHERE THE POLICIES THEMSELVES HAVE NOT, IN THE EYES OF THE SINGAPOREANS, TAKEN SINGAPORE'S POSITION FULLY INTO ACCOUNT, HOWEVER, A CONTINUING UNEASINESS AND CONCERN IS EVIDENT HERE.

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WE EXPECT THAT THE CONTINUED APPLICATION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY WILL SERVE TO CORRECT REMAINING MISAPPREHENSIONS AMONG THE SINGAPOREANS REGARDING OUR POLICIES, BUT WE WILL NEED TO KEEP CHIPPING AWAY, AND THERE WILL REMAIN AN ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY UNTIL OUR POLICIES THEMSELVES EVOLVE FURTHER. HOLDRIDGE

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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